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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/23/2017  
TAGS: PGOV PREL KBIO PINR LY  
SUBJECT: CORRECTED COPY - LIBYA'S NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL:  
EXPERIENCING GROWING PAINS

REF: TRIPOLI 432

CLASSIFIED BY: Chris Stevens, CDA, Embassy Tripoli, Department  
of State.  
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (S/NF) Summary: Libya's newly-constituted National Security Council continues to experience growing pains. A shortage of skilled staff, questions about its mandate, and friction between National Security Adviser Mutassim al-Qadhafi and some senior GOL officials have limited the NSC's organizational effectiveness, although al-Qadhafi remains "ambitious" and continues to work to expand his area of influence. End summary.

#### STAFFING CHALLENGES

¶2. (S/NF) Dr. Hind Siala, Director of Libya's National Security Council (strictly protect), told P/E Chief that the NSC, formed earlier this year (reftel), was experiencing growing pains. Noting that the NSC's staff had grown in size, she cited a continuing shortage of skilled, trained individuals as an impediment to greater organizational effectiveness. The NSC had to date pulled most of its staff from other GOL entities, including the External Security Organization, Internal Security Organization, General People's Committee for Foreign Cooperation and International Liaison (MFA) and Ministry of Justice. Siala noted that training and skill sets among staff drawn from other organizations varied considerably.

¶3. (S/NF) Other organizations were initially more willing to provide staff, she said, in part because they feared repercussions if they refused requests from a son of Leader Muammar al-Qadhafi; however, the NSC's policy of aggressively identifying and attempting to lure quality staff had begun to engender resentment and a sense that the NSC was pursuing its staffing needs at the expense of other GOL agencies. Siala mentioned that the MFA had successfully resisted an attempt in late November by the NSC to request that a well-regarded MFA employee be detailed to the NSC (NFI).

NATIONAL SECURITY TRAINING ACADEMY IN THE WORKS?

¶4. (S/NF) Noting a lack of basic professional skills, Siala specifically mentioned a shortage of employees who could take notes in meetings and draft memoranda of conversations. Describing National Security Adviser Mutassim al-Qadhafi as a "dynamic" individual given to holding many meetings, she complained that the dearth of qualified working-level employees meant that more senior staff members such as herself were often pressed into service as notetakers. She indicated that al-Qadhafi, responding to suggestions from his advisers, is moving to establish a National Security Training Academy that would train staff for the NSC and other GOL entities with national security and foreign policy equities. Pointing to the poor quality of Libya's educational system, she conceded that the NSC and other GOL entities were "suffering" from the fact that comparatively few Libyans were able to engage in critical thinking and writing of a sort that lent itself to more sophisticated exercises such as drafting analytical reports. (Note: We understand that the UK Embassy in Tripoli has discussed with her possible training opportunities in the UK for NSC terrorism analysts. End note.)

MUTASSIM'S AMBITION CREATES FRICTION WITH SOME

¶5. (S/NF) Siala noted that the NSC as an organization is still trying to define its role within the GOL. It remains "a bit unclear" whether the NSC is to serve as an interagency coordinating mechanism, or as a formulator and implementer of policy in its own right. Responding to a question about whether her principal's personality might have something to do with that, she conceded that Mutassim al-Qadhafi is "ambitious" and said he is still working to "create a space" in which to work cooperatively with other senior GOL officials. She implied that doubts among some senior members of the GOL's old guard about

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whether Mutassim was substantively qualified for his position, together with his increasingly obvious desire to grow his fiefdom, had created friction with unnamed others in the leadership. Indicating that the MFA and "some security organizations" had been particularly resistant to the NSC's attempts to expand its brief, she said the Ministry of Public Security (MinInterior-equivalent) and armed forces had been less recalcitrant.

¶6. (S/NF) According to Siala, the NSC's membership is as follows: PM al-Baghdadi al-Mahmoudi (chairman); National Security Adviser Mutassim al-Qadhafi; Foreign Minister Abdulrahman Shalgham; Minister of Public Security (MinInterior-equivalent) Rajib Saleh; Minister of Economy and Trade Essawi; Minister of Finance Muhammad Ali al-Hweij; and Chief of Defense Major General Abubakr Yunis Jafr. It is believed that Jafr encumbers the seat reserved for a "representative of the Temporary General People's Committee" per Law Number Four of 2007, which established the NSC.

¶7. (S/NF) Comment: Siala's suggestion that Mutassim's ambitions have caused friction with others in the leadership accords with the view of some local observers that Mutassim is an increasingly important player in the political firmament. Determining how he is perceived as a potential successor to his father, particularly by key members of his father's cohort of contemporaries, remains something of an open question, however. There are reports that putative heir apparent Saif al-Islam al-Qadhafi is out of favor with some segments of the leadership, due to his public participation in the messy denouement of the Bulgarian nurses' case, and his championing of economic reforms. End comment.

¶8. (U) Biographical note: Siala, who was trained as a pharmacist and previously served as Libya's ambassador to Valletta, serves as a combination of chief-of-staff and senior special assistant to Mutassim al-Qadhafi. She is married to a Libyan businessman who, somewhat unusually, is several years her junior. She is the niece of Deputy Foreign Minister Muhammad Siala.

STEVENS